

SRTS News, June 2007:

Encouraging Safe Bicycling and Walking to School

Request for Proposals Expected in late July or Early August

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A request for proposals for the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program is now anticipated for late July or early August while we fine-tune the process.

Projects ranging from student and parent surveys to education and encouragement programs will likely highlight the first round of reimbursement funding for New Hampshire schools and their communities.

SRTS encourages children from kindergarten through eighth grade to **safely walk or ride bicycles to school** if they live within approximately two miles. The N.H. Department of Transportation (NHDOT) administers this innovative program in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Funding **criteria**, the **application form** and detailed **guidelines** are currently under review by NHDOT. The next step is consideration of the

overall program by the Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT), scheduled for July 18.

Program guidelines originally published on the state's [SRTS Web site](#) have been revised. Changes were based on comments from Regional Planning Commissions, municipal and school leaders, organizations, interested citizens and experiences in other states.

With the new draft guidelines, NHDOT recognizes that communities have reached various stages in the SRTS planning process. Some have held preliminary meetings to learn about the program and begin organizing planning task forces. Others may be ready to apply for funding for infrastructure projects.

Under the draft proposals, communities that form a SRTS planning task force will be eligible to apply for **startup funding up to \$5,000**. Funds may be used for reimbursement of expenses related to surveys, preparing a travel plan, and initial education, encouragement and enforcement activities.

Localities may also compete for larger amounts based on a detailed budget for **preparing a travel plan and other non-infrastructure projects**. (See the Web site for detailed information on the [“5Es.”](#))

The proposed criteria also recognize the **ongoing efforts** of cities, towns and school districts that **can integrate SRTS into existing programs**.

Regional Planning Commissions and other organizations offering services directly related to SRTS will also be eligible for funding if the drafts are approved.

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Community outreach

John Corrigan, SRTS coordinator for NHDOT, continues to meet with leaders at the local level. In May and early June, preliminary meetings were held in **Andover, Charlestown, Farmington, Keene, Portsmouth, Strafford, Tuftonboro and Weare**.

As described in previous newsletters, SRTS planning task forces take a variety of forms. In some cities and towns, community-wide working groups have formed. This can be an efficient approach because multiple schools can work with municipal departments. **Charlestown, Concord, Gilford Lebanon, Nashua, and Portsmouth** have formed such committees.

Efforts in **Andover, Gorham, Keene, and Warren** have focused initially on individual schools. Andover is the first community that is exploring ways to link school travel routes to an alternative non-motorized, transportation corridor: the Northern Rail Trail in Merrimack County. Committee members in Weare are also thinking about trail systems linking schools to neighborhoods.

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It's not too late

Schools and communities that are not yet participating in NHSRTS are invited to get involved. The first step is to fill out and submit the **“preliminary school survey”** form, available by contacting the coordinator (see below) or by downloading it from the [home page](#) of our Web site.

The coordinator will meet with local leaders at their convenience to explain the program, answer questions, and guide them in organizing a task force and implementing the program.

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Active lifestyle initiatives

SRTS professionals and activists across the country recognize the program's role in a growing movement promoting healthy lifestyles based on physical activity and good nutrition.

NHSRTS is cooperating with the Healthy Eating, Active Living initiative to develop a statewide plan to address the recognized public health effects of sedentary living. NHDOT is also participating in the

No Child Left Inside program organized by the N.H. Fish and Game Department.

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Web seminars

NHDOT is sponsoring three Web seminars on the SRTS program, offered by the National Center for Safe Routes to School and the Institute of Transportation Engineers.

The seminars are designed for engineers and transportation professionals, and are open to anyone interested in the program.

The topics are:

- **Overview of the SRTS program.**
- **Identifying barriers and engineering solutions to SRTS.**
- **School area traffic controls.**

The seminars will be offered at the DOT's John O. Morton Building, 7 Hazen Drive, Concord, on **July 10, 11, and 12 from noon to 1:30 p.m..**

The seminars are free, with registrations accepted on a first-come, first-served basis for 12 participants. Contact the SRTS coordinator to reserve your spot.

For more information on NHSRTS contact:

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